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Title: The Elven Kingdom [1]

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Many of you may be familiar with the increasing elven activity in our realm. The story I relate to you now shines a light on recent troubles within the Elven Kingdom of Asur'Herenion. The story is just as I witnessed it not but one day ago. Take a seat friends, let me begin my tale.

I was walking to the town of Yew on the Felucca Facet, to tend to my shop just East of Empath Abby. On my way there, I encountered a group passing by in the forest. At first their silent, stealthy steps were surprising, it was by sheer luck that I had been able to pinpoint them throughout the dense Yew forests at all. I soon recognized them at however, they were the elves of the Kingdom of Asur'Herenion. Having met the kindly King Khyl'Dran, I counted them as friends and approached them. However, their usual cheerful aspect was substituted by a grim look, as if something terrible had happened.

“Friends...pardon my frankness, but what is the matter? Is something amiss?” I asked.

“Indeed something is, Aleph Aeirs,” Said one

elf. “Our King, Khyl’Dran, has disappeared in some manner I do not comprehend...He was trapped, somehow, inside a crystal by use of some obscure form of magic.”

I was stunned, it took a moment for the information to sink in. “This is horrid news...who did this thing?” I inquired.

“Come inside and I will tell you,” Said the elf. He beckoned me towards an opening in the thick forest. Inside, the elves had created an hidden encampment. They served me some elven wine and offered me a seat around the fire.

“It is the Drow. This, a group that had once been taken for granted, They were not considered a threat,” explained the elf, “but they have erred, we have all erred. The Drow are the greatest threat of all...”

I sipped from my elven wine, deep in thought. It was true that the Drow were not seen as a threat, so to speak. No one had considered it, until now.

The elf continued: “Our king had gone to speak diplomatically with the Lichdrow Chaszmyr. It was there that he was taken by Nai Asonod, a defector from our kingdom who joined the Lichdrow’s guild Agrach Dyrr. I know little more. But we are seeking all information we can find.”

I was incensed and

inspired to action  
immediately. Although  
human, I have a special  
place in my heart for  
the elven culture. To  
think the Drow would look  
to make them suffer so!

I stood, thanking the  
elves for their hospitality.

"Tell me friends, where  
would I be most likely to  
find Nai Asonod?" I asked.

"Look to Caina, he is  
known to frequent that  
damnable city." Said one  
of the elves.

"Friends, I am just one  
man, but I will attempt  
to gather some  
information...perhaps shed  
light on this nightmare."

The elves around the fire  
simply looked at me and  
nodded. The fire sparkled  
in their eyes, a deep  
sadness in their  
expression.

I nodded in return,  
thanked them once again,  
making my way to Caina.

The city was deadly cold,  
being located in the  
frozen wastelands of  
Dagger Isle. I made a  
point not to spend too  
much time in this  
wretched city, one for  
the environs, the other  
because I have never been  
all that..welcome. I chose  
to begin my hunt for  
this Nai Asonod in the  
Tower of Skulls.

I stepping on the stairs  
and walking into the  
tower, my head swooned.  
Decay and dust, the very  
nature of the tower, had  
an ill effect on my being.  
Shaking off the sensation,

I surveyed the scene. Nai Asonod was nowhere to be seen. I decided to check the upper levels of the tower, hoping that I could either find him, or clues to his whereabouts.

As luck would have it, (so to speak) there he was. He was on the second floor of Golgotha, engrossed in an ancient manuscript, the like which I had never before seen.

Nai looked up from the ancient tome, his silver hair spilling out across the dark knight armor he wore. He knew me by sight, yet I had never met him in person.

"Greetings Aleph, interested in the..happenings as of late, or so I hear..."

His smile was disturbing, as he toyed with a diamond necklace around his neck.

I was quiet for a moment, not certain where to begin. Here he was, the antagonist. I was certain of myself when I left the elves in the clearing...but faced with Nai Asonod himself, I wasn't all that sure what to say.

"Come then, Aleph..I offer you a chair, how can I help you in your search for knowledge?"

I smiled nervously. "Well, to begin, I am very interested in verifying rumors I have heard. As you may know, I am a member of the press. As a professional courtesy I approach you first.

Virtues forbid I share  
news of these happenings  
without knowing the facts  
first."

At the mention of the  
Virtues, he chuckled  
softly. I took a moment  
to glance at the tome he  
had been studying. I could  
make out one line, but it  
made no sense to me.  
Something concerning the  
entrapment of Eldritch  
Daemons known as  
Arcanaloth...

He abruptly closed the  
book. Startled, I jumped.  
"Well, good Aleph...I see  
you are a bit..uneasy in  
my presence....let me first  
assure you that you are  
safe, in body and in mind.  
And that is well that the  
public should know of the  
goings on...it is the  
Truth...and the truth, tis  
said, shall set ye free."

He shifted his slight  
elven frame in the large  
throne, a wickedly bladed  
ax rested beside him,  
leaning against the wall.

He proffered forth a  
glass of blood red liqueur.  
"Some wine, before I  
make the tale known?"

I am certain the disgust  
showed on my face. The  
smell of the liquid was  
not foreign to me, it was  
blood wine. "Oh..well, I...well  
see, I am not known to  
partake in...beverage of  
that nature. I thank thee  
none the less."

I did however take the  
seat offered. "However, I  
would gladly hear the  
details of recent events,  
sans the libation of  
course..."

He shrugged and set the goblet of bloodwine down on a mahogany desk. "Well then, I shall tarry no longer... Up until most recently, I was a member of the Kingdom of the Elves, known as the Asur'Herenion. As a member, I was a trusted individual, the Ambassador, a friend to all, and like a father to most."

He appeared slightly saddened, perhaps by some memory or realization, but he quickly shrugged it off, continuing to speak. "After some doings and much thinking on my part, I decided it best to leave them, as I, obviously, am not a child of light." He took a long sip of the wine, and began again. "After much deliberation on my part, as well as the Lich Drow Chaszmyr's, and after many jibes and taunts, mocking and mental beatings by the hands of my one time friends, I decided to take matters a step further, and came upon a plan to capture none other than Khyl'Dran, the King of the Asur'Herenion." He smiled darkly and held the diamond of necklace up to be seen. "Sometimes...there is no way to escape what fate deals out...." He said, as he let the chain drop back to his chest.

The words left my lips as soon as they entered my head. "Captured..in that necklace there? But..how? How could you do such a thing?"

He smiled darkly and twirled the gem to

sparkle in the dim light.  
"Yes..very perceptive,  
Aleph, this gem is the  
means of containment..but  
how you ask? To  
understand this you must  
first understand who  
implemented the process,  
at least in part. I am  
not from this plane of  
existence. I hail from a  
land known as Faerun.  
There, I was a great  
mage and a feared  
warrior" He chuckled  
laconically at this. "Though  
the better part of my  
magic is worthless here..."  
He looked at the gem  
bemusedly. "...Sometimes I  
find a place...where the  
power is sufficient to  
make it work correctly,  
thus we have this.

My determination grew,  
and I took a deep breath.  
It was more important to  
gather information, I  
simply had to keep my  
temper in check. "So the  
rumors are indeed true. I  
am...stunned to say the  
least." I look closely at  
the diamond necklace.  
"You have done a horrible  
thing here, tell me..what  
are your intentions now?  
Surely you realize that  
an event of this nature  
cannot go unavenged..."

He smiled and put the  
necklace back on his neck.  
"A horrible thing, eh?  
Perceptions based upon  
perceptions would suggest  
this, yes. But, would you  
like to know the Truth  
of it, Aleph?"

I nodded "Aye, I would."

\*continued in volume  
two\*